

Weekly Column for Thursday, October 26, 2005

Normally I try to keep the tone of this column a little lighthearted, nothing too serious, but this week that is going to change slightly.

This week I want to talk about the drop in crime in Troy over the past year. According to statistics that were recently confirmed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the New York State Department of Criminal Justice, crime in the City of Troy decreased nearly 4.9 percent last year. In addition to that, we were the only large City in the area that saw a decrease in major crime.

For comparison purposes, Albany and Schenectady both saw around a 10 percent increase in the area of crime during the past year.

The reason for bringing this up is a recent report in the Troy Record suggesting that certain tactics used by our Police Department are racially motivated. According the newspaper, an inordinate number of minorities are being arrested for jaywalking and riding bicycles without lights in the City.

The New York Civil Liberties Union jumped in this week with a letter to the City ordering us to cease and desist the practice of arresting people for jaywalking.

In an effort to clear up any confusion, let me make it perfectly clear that in no way are our police officers targeting minorities while on patrol. It just is not the case.

What we are doing is concentrating our police efforts in areas with higher instances of crime. We are following up on neighborhood complaints and cracking down on the areas that are in need of help.

In North Central Troy, parts of the downtown, and South Troy, resident there are dealing with more crime than other parts of the City. It is a fact, and it is not one we hide from. Instead we are working to improve things.

As I said to a local radio station this morning, we are not going to apologize for trying to improve the quality of life in Troy. As I've said many times in this space, we believe in the broken windows theory of crime fighting, and will continue to crackdown on the nuisance crimes that always lead to bigger problems.

We are working with the City Court judge to change the way the law is on the books so that people are not arrested and thrown in jail for these crimes issues. However, we will not stop what we believe is another tool we can use to keep the residents of Troy safe.

If you have any concerns about the matter, or would like to talk about it, please contact me at 270-4401 or e-mail me at mayorsoffice@troyny.gov

Have a great weekend.

Harry J Tutunjian
Mayor of Troy